

*The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Coastal Program helps achieve the Service's mission by protecting important coastal ecosystems.*

**The Coastal Program**

Nationally the Coastal Program has:

- Restored over 223,000 acres of coastal wetlands
- Restored over 75,000 acres of coastal upland habitat
- Restored over 1,700 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat
- Protected over 1.78 million acres of habitat
- Leveraged Federal tax dollars at least 3:1 through partnerships

**The Coastal Program is:**

- Voluntary and non-regulatory
- Strategically ecosystem-based
- Partnership driven
- Results oriented
- Directly assisting partners (financially and technically)



Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

*Coastal habitat*



USFWS

*Swamp pink*

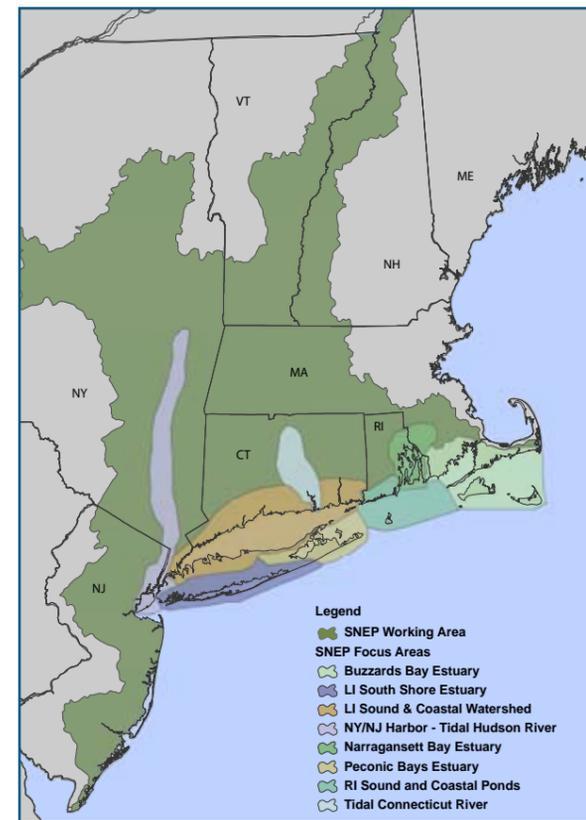


DU Canada

*Lesser Yellowlegs*

**What is the Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program?**

The Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program (SNEP) is one of 21 coastal programs nationally that facilitates local conservation. The SNEP area covers coastal watersheds in seven states with habitats ranging from salt marsh to forest (see map). The staff in the SNEP office carefully selected eight focal areas to concentrate their conservation efforts. These areas are high in biodiversity and are home to endangered or threatened species.



**Challenges Facing Coastal Conservation**

Over the last several hundreds of years coastal resources have been under stress from urban and suburban development, loss of wetlands, excessive nutrient-enrichment, pollutants, and obstacles to fish migration, and invasive-exotic species. In addition to these threats, new challenges rise to the surface.

- By the year 2025, nearly 75 percent of all Americans are expected to live in coastal counties.
- While the full range of potential impacts from global climate change are uncertain, virtually every habitat will be impacted. By restoring and securing the habitats necessary to maintain the fish and wildlife in coastal areas, the Coastal Program and its partners can help mitigate the impacts of climate change.



Jane Hawkey, IAN Image Library

*Flooding habitat and wildfire are potential impacts to coastal systems from climate change*



National Interagency Fire Center



USFWS

*Sprawl*

**Facing These Challenges Together**

We work collaboratively with our partners to identify, restore and protect regionally important habitat in the Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program area.

- Specifically, we work with our partners to:
- Assess priority fish and wildlife resources;
  - Conduct strategic land protection and habitat restoration;
  - Assist in management actions to protect coastal fish and wildlife resources;
  - Support climate change monitoring and planning efforts; and
  - Promote public awareness of the value of coastal habitats, the threats they face, and the opportunities available for the public to become involved in finding solutions.

The challenges facing our coastal communities will require strong partnerships and creative solutions. We will continue to use a voluntary, collaborative approach, and seek opportunities to protect and restore high value habitat throughout the area.



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*Shortnose sturgeon*



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*Bog turtle*



Bill Majoros



USFWS



Bill Majoros



*Great Blue Heron*

Bill Majoros

**Cooperating for Conservation**

From 2004 to 2008 SNEP worked with dozens of partners on 32 projects in our focus areas. This work contributed to the protection, enhancement, or restoration of nearly 1,000 acres of habitat and 11 river miles that support dozens of migratory and federally protected species. Working with partners, SNEP provides technical assistance and in some cases, funding for river restoration and fish passage; invasive species removal and control; land acquisition; and monitoring and surveying of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

**Habitat Inventory and Assessment**

Coastal program staff works with partners to identify, inventory, and assess the status of coastal habitats and their living resources. This information helps guide strategic land protection and restoration projects in the SNEP program area.



SNEP biologists inventory eelgrass beds

USFWS

**Habitat Protection & Restoration**

The varied habitats within the SNEP program area are home to many threatened and endangered species including: roseate tern, Northeastern beach tiger beetle, bog turtle, Indiana bat, and piping plover. Whether restoring salt marsh habitat to provide a nursery area for migratory fish or acquiring land along the coast for important foraging, resting and nesting habitat for migratory birds, SNEP staff work with partners on the ground, provide technical advice, and funding to protect and restore the native habitats of these species.



**Fish Passage Activities**

There are over 5,400 large dams in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey as well as thousands of low head dams and water control structures that prevent fish migrations. Many of these obstacles are within the boundaries of the SNEP program area and block important riverine habitat for several migratory fish species. Removing barriers is critical for the survival of several species including alewife and blueback herring, American shad, sea-run brook trout and American eel. In order to protect and restore habitat for fish, the office provides funding and technical expertise, and collaborates with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices, other federal and state agencies, NGOs, private landowners and corporate interests. Restoring rivers and increasing fish populations boosts the biological productivity of the entire river corridor, as well as estuaries and oceans for every living thing including aquatic insects, mussels, waterbirds, furbearing mammals, seabirds, marine mammals and commercially and recreationally important fish.



Bradford fishway

Chris Fox

**Invasive Species Management**

Several non-native invasive species threaten the natural resources in the SNEP program area. *Phragmites*, purple loosestrife, and waterchestnut are aggressive plants that compete with native wetland plants and animals reducing the quality of habitat for many priority migratory birds. SNEP staff provides technical advice, coordinate eradication efforts, and provide funding to partners to improve the function and the value of habitat for trust resources.



Invasive plant management

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**Our Partners**

**Connecticut**

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Connecticut Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Connecticut Sea Grant, Regional Plan Association, Audubon Connecticut, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut College, University of Connecticut, and the Branford Land Trust.

**Massachusetts**

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Massachusetts Audubon's Coastal Waterbird Program, Save the Bay, and Seabird Ecological Assessment Network.

**New Jersey**

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Audubon Society, and The Delaware River Shad Fisherman's Association.

**New York**

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, Regional Plan Association, State University of New York, New York Sea Grant, New York Audubon, and Westchester, Suffolk and Nassau Counties.

**Rhode Island**

Providence Water, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Rhode Island Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Save the Bay, University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Land Trust Council, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Salt Ponds Coalition, Rhode Island Audubon Society, Rhode Island Natural History Survey, Rhode Island Sea Grant, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council.

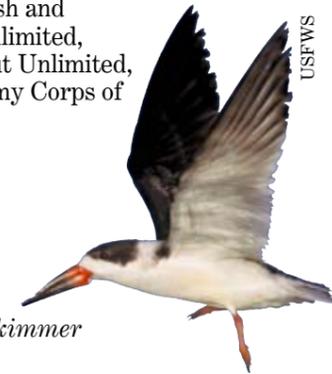


Eider nest

Dr. G Dallas and Margaret Hanna © California Academy of Sciences

**Regional and National Partners**

Environmental Protection Agency, Fish America Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Coast Guard, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Trust for Public Land, and Army Corps of Engineers.



Black Skimmer

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Front cover photo: Roseate Tern, USFWS

# Southern New England-New York Bight

## Coastal Program

*Working with partners to identify, restore, and protect regionally important habitat in the Southern New England-New York Bight Coastal Program area.*



LONG ISLAND SOUND  
ATLANTIC OCEAN

